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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 AID-05 TRSE-00 /076 W
----------200924Z 099042 /13
R 181330Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7569
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMCONSUL ADANA
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR
USCINCEUR
CINCUSAFE
USDOCOSOUTH
USDOCOLANDSOUTHEAST
DIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, TU, EFIN
SUBJECT: TURKISH ELECTION CAMPAIGN ROUNDUP, MAY 12-18

REF: ANKARA 3647 (DTG 111405Z MAY 77)

1. ALL PARTIES CAMPAIGNED IN FULL FORCE THIS WEEK. THE JUSTICE PARTY (JP) FINALLY OPENED ITS CAMPAIGN WITH A SPEECH BY PRIMIN DEMIREL IN ERZURUM. THE JP, THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP), AND DEP PRIMIN ERBAKAN'S NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY (NSP) EACH CLAIMED THAT IT WOULD WIN
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A MAJORITY, BUT WITHOUT CARRYING MUCH CONVICTION. BOTH THE JP AND THE RPP LEADERS ARE ATTRACTING LARGE CROWDS TO THEIR RALLIES, AND NO CLEAR MAJORITY SWING TO EITHER IS YET APPARENT. POLITICIANS WITH WHOM WE SPOKE POINTED OUT THAT EVENTS OF THE REMAINING TWO AND A HALF WEEKS OF THE CAMPAIGN COULD DO MUCH TO TIP THE ELECTION ONE WAY OR THE OTHER. POLITICAL VIOLENCE REMAINED AT A RELATIVELY LOW LEVEL,

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PRIMARILY IN THE FORM OF STUDENT CLASHES (SEVERAL OF WHICH
RESULTED IN DEATHS).

2. NSP CAMPAIGN. THE NSP, CONTINUING TO SUFFER FROM INTERNAL
FACTIONALISM, WAS HIT BY INFLUENCE-PEDDLING CHARGES INVOLVING
AKGUN ERBAKAN, BROTHER OF THE NSP LEADER. THESE CHARGES
WERE THE SUBJECT OF A MAJOR PRESS CAMPAIGN SPEARHEADED BY
PRO-RPP CUMHURIYET AND MILLIYET, BUT EAGERLY PICKED UP BY MOST
OF THE RIGHT-WING PRESS AS WELL. AKGUN ERBAKAN WAS SPECIFICALLY
CHARGED WITH HAVING SIGNED A HALF-MILLION LIRA CONTRACT TO
USE HIS INFLUENCE TO OBTAIN THE NECESSARY LICENSE FROM THE
NSP-CONTROLLED MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY FOR
A COMPANY WHICH WANTED TO MANUFACTURE TELEVISION SETS, AND
WITH HAVING BEEN INVOLVED IN SIMILAR DEALS INVOLVING PERMITS FOR
TIR TRUCKERS. RPP LEADER ECEVIT, IN A THEME ECHOED IN LEFTIST
PRESS, HAS LINKED THE ERBAKAN BROTHER SCANDAL WITH
EARLIER SCANDALS INVOLVING DEMIREL'S RELATIVES, CHARGING THAT
DESPITE THEIR TALK OF RELIGION AND MORALITY, THE RULING RIGHT-
WING PARTIES ARE CHARACTERIZED BY CORRUPTION AND SELF-
SEEKING. ERBAKAN, WHO LABELED THE CHARGES "A PHOTO-MONTAGE
OF LIES", CAMPAIGNED IN WESTERN TURKEY AND THE BLACK SEA
REGION BEFOE REPORTEDLY SMALL CROWDS.

3 ECONOMIC ISSUES. ALSO PROMINENTLY PLAYED IN MILLIYET
AND CUMHURIYET, BUT PICKED UP ONLY TO A LESSER DEGREE BY
OTHER LEFTIST PAPERS, WERE CHARGES THAT GOVERNMENT MISMANAGE-
MENT HAS PRODUCED A FOREIGN-EXCHANGE SHORTAGE WHICH HAS BROUGHT
THE COUNTRY TO THE POINT OF BANKRUPTCY. UNCLASSIFIED CABLES
ON THE SUBJECT FROM GHE TURKISH AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN AND THE
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TURKISH CONSUL GENERAL GENERAL IN GENEVA WERE RELEASED TO THE
PRESS BY RPP SEN. USTUNEL MAY 16. ACCORDING TO PUBLISHED
PHOTOGRAPHS OF HIS CABLE, AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN EYICEOGLU SAID,
"WE ARE FACING A SITUATION WHICH IMPAIRS OUR RESPECTABILITY
AS A STATE," AND ADDED, REFERRING TO PROBLEMS IN CASHING
CENTRAL BANK CHECKS, "IT IS A BITTER FEELING TO BE
REDUCED TO THE STATE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF A COUNTRY WHICH
IS UNABLE EVEN TO PAY THE SALARIES OF ITS CIVIL SERVANTS."
THE GOVERNMENT COUNTER-ATTACKED WITH A STATEMENT BY FINANCE
MINISTER ERGENEKON MAY 16 DENYING CHARGES THAT FOREIGN BANKS WERE
REFUSING TO HONOR CENTRAL BANK DRAFTS AND THAT THE INTERNATIONAL
MONETARY FUND WAS PRESSING FOR A 20 PERCENT DEVALUATION OF THE
LIRA, QUOTING FIGURES TO PROVE THAT TURKEY HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL
IN ATTRACTING WORKER'S REMITTANCES AND THAT IT HAD ADEQUATE
FOREIGN RESERVES. IN STATEMENTS MAY 17, ERGENEKON AND
CENTRAL BANK PRESIDENT SADIKLAR CHARGED THAT "IRRESPONSIBLE"
RPP REPORTS OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE PROBLEMS WERE HARMING THE
PRESTIGE OF THE CENTRAL BANK ABROAD AND WERE DETRIMENTAL TO
TURKEY'S INTERESTS.

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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4. JP CAMPAIGN. FOLLOWING HIS RETURN FROM THE LONDON NATO CONFERENCE TO A PARTY-MANAGED "HERO'S WELCOME" IN ANKARA, DEMIREL FORMALLY OPENED THE JP CAMPAIGN WITH A SPEECH IN ERZURUM MAY 14, THE 27THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEMOCRAT PARTY'S ACCESSION TO POWER IN 1950. (THE JP CLAIMS TO BE THE DEMO-CRAT PARTY'S SUCCESSOR.) THE REPORTEDLY DISAPPOINTING RALLY IN ERZURUM (THOUGH A PHOTO IN ANTI-DEMIREL GUNAYDIN SHOWED AN IMPRESSIVE CROWD) WAS FOLLOWED BY LARGE CROWDS AT SPEECHES IN SAMSUN, AMASYA, SIVAS, TOKAT, AND YOZGAT. WHILE CONTINUING TO ATTACK THE RPP AS THE PARTY OF COMMUNISM, INTERNATIONALISM, AND ANARCHY, DEMIREL ATTACKED HIS COALITION PARTNER, THE NSP,
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ALMOST EQUALLY. APPEALING TO ALL CONSERVATIVES ("NATIONALISTS") TO RALLY TO THE JP, HE CHARGED THAT "A VOTE FOR THE NSP IS A VOTE FOR THE RPP." IN HIS YOZGAT SPEECH MAY 17, HE SAID OF THE NSP, "IT IS THE SUPPORTER OF A NONSENSICAL NATIONAL VIEW -- THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT IT MEANS." NO ONE CAN SAY WHETHER THE NSP IS NATIONALIST OR LEFTIST, HE CHARGED.

5. U.S.-TURKISH RELATIONS. IN THE FIRST MENTION OF U.S.-TURKISH RELATIONS IN A CAMPAIGN SPEECH BY A MAJOR PARTY LEADER, DEMIREL SAID IN YOZGAT MAY 17, "DESPITE THE PEOPLE'S PARTY CHAIRMAN'S HAVING DENOUNCED HIS OWN COUNTRY'S GOVERNMENT TO FOREIGNERS BY SAYING 'HE CAN'T CLOSE THE COMMON FACILITIES, HE'S BLUFFING,' THE COMMON DEFENSE FACILITIES WERE CLOSED." THIS PORTION OF DEMIREL'S SPEECH GOT LITTLE ATTENTION, HOWEVER, IN MOST OF THE PRESS.

6. RPP CAMPAIGN. ECEVIT CAMPAIGNED IN ADANA, HATAY, ESKISEHIR, AND TRABZON, REPEATEDLY DRAWING LARGE CROWDS (AN ESTIMATED HUNDRED THOUSAND IN ADANA MAY 14). MAIN THEMES WERE CHARGES AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT OF CORRUPTION AND ECONOMIC INCOMPETENCE (SEE ABOVE) AND OF PROMOTING POLITICAL VIOLENCE. IN A STATEMENT TO A GERMAN CORRESPONDENT, REPORTED IN MILLIYET, ECEVIT SAID THAT AN RPP GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT LEAVE NATO OR CHOOSE A NEUTRALIST FOREIGN POLICY, ALTHOUGH HE NOTED THAT "OUR COOPERATION WITH NATO DEPENDS ON OUR PARTNERS' AID." HE SAID THAT THE RPP GOVERNMENT WOULD BE ABLE TO FIND EARLY SOLUTIONS TO THE CYPRUS AND AEGEAN ISLANDS PROBLEMS, REPEATING AN EARLIER THEME (REFTEL) BY ADDING "TO ALLAY GREECE'S ANXIETY FROM THE OUTSET, LET ME NOW STATE THAT THE JUST SOLUTION TO THE AEGEAN SITUATION SHOULD NEITHER BE AFFECTED BY THE GREEK ISLANDS NOR AFFECT THE STATUS OF THOSE ISLANDS...THE TURKISH NATION HAS NO EYE ON THESE ISLANDS; HOWEVER, THESE ISLANDS SHOULD NEVER MEAN THAT THE AEGEAN SEABED, SURFACE, OR AIRSPACE BELONG TO GREECE."

7. PROBLEMS OF THE LEFT. GRUMBLING BY LABOR LEADERS IN
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ISTANBUL AND ELSEWHERE OVER THEIR POOR REPRESENTATION ON THE RPP CANDIDATE SLATES SUGGESTS A POSSIBLE LOOSENING OF THE RPP'S ELECTION ALLIANCE WITH THE LEFTIST DISK LABOR FEDERATION AND A LOSS OF SOME LEFTIST LABOR VOTES TO THE TURKISH LABOR PARTY (TLP) OF BEHICE BORAN, WHO HAS BEEN ACCUSING THE RPP AND JP OF CALLOUSLY EXPLOITING POLITICAL VIOLENCE TO WIN VOTES. (A MILLIYET POLL IN ISTANBUL INDICATED THAT, TO THE EXTENT THAT THE MAY DAY VIOLENCE THERE HAD AFFECTED PEOPLE'S VOTING INTENTIONS, IT HAD MAINLY TURNED THEM AGAINST THE LEFT, PRESUMABLY INCLUDING BOTH THE RPP AND THE TLP.) THE TLP MAY HAVE BEEN DAMAGED BY THE ANNOUNCE-

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MENT LAST WEEK BY ANOTHER OFFSHOOT OF THE OLD TLP,
THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTIONARY PARTY, THAT IT WILL SUPPORT
INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES RATHER THAN BORAN'S TLP.

8. CONSULATES GENERAL ISTANBUL AND IZMIR AND CONSULATE
ADANA HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT.
MACOMBER

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